

## The Way You Make Me Feel by [kittenCorrosion](#)

**Series:** [Stranger Teens](#) [3]

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** F/M, Fluff, also they're at a lake so get ready for awkward! Mike dealing with el looking cute af in a bikini, he's flustered and yeah it's great, i mean they're sixteen/seventeen so it's gonna happen, it's going to get a little steamy, there's a makeout

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Lucas Sinclair, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Eleven/Mike Wheeler

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**Summary:**

Mike and El have been officially dating for three months, so to celebrate they head out of Hawkins to a nearby lake for a day at the beach. The guys end up tagging along, but it doesn't stop the happy couple from discovering new things about their relationship and each other.

# The Way You Make Me Feel

## Author's Note:

okay so cole, my editor lol, gave me the prompt of "el and mike at the beach" and this is what came from that. after writing the prom fic, i was itching to do another teenager story because honestly they're super fun as teens. and honestly i've been kind of wanting to explore mike and el's relationship so i did.

just a warning, there is some making out. and nudity which sounds way worse than it is they are not gross or anything i think i did a good job of keeping it like.. classy. i don't want to spoil anything, but for the most part this is me kind of trying explore mike and el and boundaries and consent. because i think it's something really important to have in a relationship and my babies need that because they're so sweet. omg.

ALSO they are like sixteen/seventeen here so i'm not writing smut or anything about lil babies please don't think i would eVAR do that. and it's not even smut soooo....

okay i'm done.

Summer 1988

The hot sun beat down on the sand, sending up ripples of heat that bounced and shimmered, the brightness making Mike wince. He reached up and flipped his cobalt-blue sunglasses off of his head and down over his eyes, keeping the other hand on the steering wheel as he parked in the sand-covered lot.

El's face was pressed against the passenger window, looking out at

the expanse of murky brown-blue water, her eyes wide and full of wonder. Her honey-brown locks were tied back, and her skin was already a golden-brown. She'd spent a lot of the summer outside, helping the Chief paint and repair the Byers house, a project he'd started after noticing the amount of leaks that came through the roof when it rained. El had made it her duty to help, lifting up stacks of shingles, balancing ladders and splattering herself with paint. She was surprisingly handy, not just because of her powers, but because she actually found herself enjoying using her hands to make things. Her favorite was painting, she loved dipping her brush in the paint can and covering the old moldy green color with a fresh coat of navy blue.

Mike had come over more than once to find her standing on a ladder, paintbrush in hand, singing along with the radio and applying the second coat. But she always paused and came down when she saw him, giving him a playful kiss and smudging paint on his clothes before dragging him inside for a glass of lemonade. It was worth the earful from his mom, every damn time.

Today was special, it had been three months since prom, three months of her officially being his girlfriend. He figured a quarter of a year warranted a little celebration, so he decided to pack a picnic and bring her to the lake, spend the day on the warm sand and in the water, enjoying each other's company. Unfortunately his perfect day alone had been abruptly shattered by reality and parents and of course, Dustin.

"Dude! Check out all the girls in bikinis!"

Lucas shoved Dustin out of the way, trying to see out the window, while Will quietly glanced out his own window, mind elsewhere. Lucas snorted, disappointed.

"There's like two of them, the rest are all old ladies."

"It's better than nothing," Dustin opened the door, almost causing Lucas, who had been leaning against the glass, to fall out. He swore and the two shoved each other roughly before climbing out of the car.

Mike sighed and rubbed his temples, trying not to snap at his friends who had annoyed him the entire hour and a half drive there and were still annoying him now. Ideally, they wouldn't be here, but when Mike had finally gathered the courage to ask El about the trip while they were laying squished on her bed, Hop's head had popped in the open door and gruffly said, "You two aren't going alone."

So here they were, with the least offensive option he could find. Initially he had just invited Will, hoping one person would be enough, but Will had adamantly refused to be a third wheel and insisted their other friends come too.

"I don't want to watch you make out with my sister all day, Mike." His quiet voice was firm and also slightly disgusted. It was a semi-valid point so they compromised on the usual three friends and Hop had nodded, still not completely won over, but allowing them to leave that morning after breakfast.

"Come on, Mike!"

El had jumped out of the car almost as soon as it was parked, racing around the side to open Mike's door and pull him out of his seat, eyes dancing, almost bouncing from excitement. It was her first time seeing any body of water bigger than the school's pool and she wanted to get in right away. He smiled at her fondly, her excitement catching, and let her drag him out of the car and to the trunk.

"I've got the basket and the blanket, can you, uh, get the bag?" She nodded and snatched it up as he balanced the picnic basket and heavy blanket, heading towards a barren stretch of sand where the other boys were already setting out their towels and frantically rubbing on sunscreen, already having whipped off their shirts and shoes. They set their things down, both spreading out the blanket and weighing down the corners with the rest of their belongings. He dug around in the bag for his own bottle of sunscreen, pulling off his sunglasses, and then tugged his shirt off and turned back to El, who happened to be slipping her shorts down her legs, her tank top already lying discarded on the blanket.

Mike did a double take and then gulped, his mouth suddenly dry.

It wasn't the first time he'd seen her in a swimsuit, there had been the summer after she'd come back and they'd gone to the community pool before it closed down, and then last summer when he'd unwisely volunteered to help her give Shaggy, the Byers's dog, a bath. But both of those times she'd been in a plain one-piece, or wearing shorts over the suit. This time was definitely different.

She stepped out of her shorts and paused to look up at him, a small, devious smile playing at her lips. It was a bikini, but what Nancy would call "retro", the bottoms skimming her navel, outlining her hips and thin waist, the top a halter, pushing up her now generous cleavage. The whole thing was a baby pink seersucker material, and Mike's eyes nearly bugged out of his head as she walked closer to him, her hands reaching for the bottle of sunscreen. She grabbed it from him and as her hand brushed his, he abruptly turned his back on her and sat down, frantically trying to think about his grandma and roadkill and that time they'd dissected that fetal pig. Anything but El and how *damn good* she looked right now. He breathed in deeply, calming himself down.

He nearly shot straight up in the air as he felt cool hands, slick with something, smoothing over his shoulders and down his back.

"What the—"

He turned back around and found El sitting behind him cross-legged, the bottle of sunscreen in her lap. Her eyes were laughing and she held out her hands to show him they were coated in sunscreen.

"You'll burn," her voice was apologetic but she didn't really seem that sorry.

It was a valid concern, however. His lily-white skin couldn't tan, only redden and roast, and his shoulders and back were covered in freckles just like his face, memories of sunburns past.

"Oh, um, okay. Thanks."

He turned back around and let her apply the thick white paste to his neck, shoulders, and back, closing his eyes and swallowing heavily, thinking about the time he had the flu and threw up on his desk in

fifth grade and then cried in front of the entire class until his mom came and picked him up. Her hands went over his shoulders and down his front and he shuddered, abruptly turning back around and grabbing her hands to stop her. He swallowed again, face guilty.

“Uh, um....” she looked a bit hurt and he snatched the bottle from her, trying to find an excuse or an explanation, and held it up, “I’m good, should... should I do you now?”

She shrugged in agreement and scooted around, getting up to sit on her knees and as Mike squirted some sunscreen onto his hands and rubbed them together, he mentally ripped himself a new one.

*Why the hell did I think this would be easier to deal with than her putting it on me?!*

With tentative hands, he gently reached out and began to massage the stuff onto her shoulders. El relaxed and leaned into his touch, and he was now remembering when he was nine and he’d stepped on one of Holly’s dirty diapers and the mess he’d had to clean up after he ran through the house, horrified. His hands went lower and he gulped and looked up, over her shoulder towards the water where Will and Dustin were engaged in a splashing contest. Lucas was closer to shore, and when he spotted Mike’s predicament he started laughing, giving his friend a thumb’s up and a knowing grin. El waved back, the motion causing Mike’s hand to slip lower towards her hips and he blanched and swore internally. He quickly finished rubbing the sunscreen into her back and pulled his hands away.

“A-All done.” His voice choked and he cleared his throat, eyes fixated on the blanket. She looked over her shoulder at him and motioned towards the stripe of skin across her waist, between her bottoms and top.

“Can you get there too?” Her voice was innocent, she honestly wasn’t realizing the effect she was having, but Mike was now starting to turn red, and he quickly grabbed the bottle and did as she asked, rubbing the the lotion in as quickly as possible and repeating “*shit shit shit shit shit*” over and over in his mind. As soon as he was done he jumped up and raced for the water, diving in, trying to let the the cool waves calm down his raging hormones.

God. *Damn.*

El followed after him, more slowly. She had expected a reaction, she would have been disappointed if there hadn't been one, but *that* was a little more than she'd thought and she hoped she hadn't upset him. When she reached the water's edge, she tentatively walked in, letting the slight waves lap up over her feet. She went in up to her knees, but paused, face twisting with worry. Mike, who had been watching from the waist-deep water, swam back into the shallows, walking out of the water towards her, his concern for her overriding his embarrassment at his earlier reaction. He stood in front of her, trying to catch her gaze, and reached for her hand.

"You okay, El?"

She had been gazing into the water, but looked up at him, eyes unsure, face worried.

"I... I can't see the bottom."

"Oh," he looked down at their feet, barely visible through the cloudy brown water, "Well, you can stay here in the shallows if you want." He pointed further out, where Lucas and Will had teamed up against Dustin and were splashing for dear life, "But it doesn't drop off or anything. You can keep your feet on the ground until it gets too deep."

Her face was still unsure, but she kept a firm grip on Mike's hand and started walking forward, feeling the sand turn into squishy mud as they went further away from the man-made beach. They were waist-deep, then chest-deep, and then El was neck-deep, while Mike had yet to reach shoulder-deep. Her foot suddenly didn't reach the bottom and she squeaked, pulling back to where she could still touch. Their height difference didn't usually bother them, she was a solid seven inches shorter and he was still growing, but they were still a good distance from their friends and Mike frowned, trying to think of a solution. He brightened.

"Here," he turned around, offering his back, "I'll give you a piggyback ride. So you don't drown."

She hesitated, but then obliged, trusting him, and hopped onto his back, gripping his waist with her legs and wrapping her arms around his neck, her head resting on her arms. He grabbed her legs, making sure she was secure, before continuing to walk into the deeper water.

“Thanks, Mike.” Her voice was soft, lips brushing his ear, and he was suddenly extremely aware of the fact that he was gripping the underside of her thighs, her chest pressed against his bare back.

“Ah, uh... no p-problem,” he managed to stutter out, desperately trying to focus on his friends in front of him and not his attractive girlfriend who was currently in the most adorable swimsuit he had ever seen and *pressed up against his back*.

“About time you guys joined us,” Dustin had waved the white flag and was wiping the water out of his eyes.

“Y-yuh.” Mike managed to say. His friends gave him a weird look, but El piped up and they gave her their attention instead.

“I... I was scared,” she said meekly, “I couldn’t see the bottom.” She tightened her grip on Mike’s neck, borderline choking him, and pressing herself against him harder, affectionately squeezing his waist with her legs. “But Mike saved me.” She smiled at them brightly, still completely unaware of how she was affecting her boyfriend. He cleared his throat and nodded, trying to make his tongue work again.

“It’s no b-big deal,” He managed to say almost completely normal, but Lucas raised an eyebrow at him and smirked, becoming all too aware of what was going on in his best friend’s mind.

“You going to be okay there, Mike?” He snickered and El suddenly looked confused, loosening her grip, concern filling her eyes.

“Am I too heavy?”

“NO. I mean, no, you’re...” Mike cleared his throat again, “you’re fine.”

Lucas waggled his eyebrows, grinning, and Mike fought the urge to give him the finger.



“Let’s play Chicken!” Dustin butted into the silent exchange, face excited. This time Mike was able to get his voice working as he shuddered.

“Hell no, Lucas almost snapped my neck last time we did that.”

Dustin shrugged, unperturbed, and gestured to El.

“It’s okay, we have more than enough people anyways.” He bounced his way over to the couple, eyes eager.

“What’s Chicken?” El asked, predictably, and Dustin gladly explained how each team had two people, one on the other’s shoulders, and the first person to get pushed or fall off their teammate loses.

“Since Mike doesn’t want to play,” He gave Mike a scathing look, “You can be my partner! Here.”

Carefully coming up next to Mike, he held out a steady hand and she gingerly climbed off of Mike’s back and onto Dustin’s shoulders, squealing a bit as he bounced her up and down playfully. Mike felt a pang of jealousy and shook it off, knowing that it was stupid, knowing that Dustin had zero interest in El and vice versa. He glanced at them again and winced, trying not to notice how Dustin was holding her calves to keep her steady and how she kept grabbing his head, hands deep in his curly hair, keeping herself balanced, laughing at every step he took. Will was trying to figure out the best way to get on Lucas’s shoulders when Mike realized he couldn’t take it.

“I... I’ll play.”

All four heads swiveled to look at him, and he stuttered for an explanation.

“I mean, I can be El’s partner and then I won’t have to be on top which is what I was worried about in the first place because last time Lucas almost snapped me in half...” He trailed off realizing he was rambling and his friends were still staring at him. Dustin shrugged and nodded, then let go of El’s legs and tilted back, causing her to fall right off his shoulders and into the water. She shrieked and Mike

swam over to her, helping her get on his shoulders while Dustin hefted Will up, Lucas playing referee.

The teams faced off, Will looking suspiciously calm. He had yet to lose a round of Chicken, a fact he was quietly proud of, and he didn't intend to start now, even if it was against his sister. El was excited, she actually quite liked competitions and sports and such, but her friends weren't exactly athletes, so for the most part that hobby was unexplored. She set her jaw determinedly and when Lucas shouted "Go!" she leaned forward and pushed Will with all of her strength. He barely moved, Dustin's grip on his legs keeping him steady, but the force of her push almost overbalanced Mike, and his face was pushed into the water. He surfaced with a gasp, barely able to catch his breath before Will had shoved El back with surprising strength. Mike's grip slipped and El felt herself falling backwards, squealing and reaching forward to grab Mike's head, her hands tangling in his long, wet hair, jerking his neck back and completely unbalancing them both. With a splash the two crashed into the water and Lucas called out, "Will and Dustin win!"

The winners let out some celebratory whoops, pumping their fists in the air, while the losers scrabbled to catch their breath and wipe the water from their eyes. Mike glanced at El and noted her sour disposition, nose scrunched up, eyes glaring. She was treading water, her apparent fear of not touching the bottom lost in the heat of her need to win. Grabbing onto Mike, she climbed back onto him roughly, her legs clamping onto his neck more tightly this time, and pointed at her brother.

"Again."

It was a demand, not a question, and they obliged, getting into position, ready for a rematch. El patted Mike's head and leaned her mouth down close to his ear, voice steely.

"Don't let go of me."

Lucas started the match and Mike gulped, clutching onto her legs for dear life as the siblings began to tussle, shoving and pushing and grunting. Mike could barely see Dustin, who was right in front of him, because of the ferocity of the splashing. He felt her slip to one

side and counterbalanced, slightly terrified of what she would do if he let her fall again, but overbalanced instead, leaning them unsteadily to the other side. Just as Will reached forward to deliver the final blow, Dustin leaped up, almost out of the water, and *shrieked* , losing his grip on Will and sending the both of them toppling over.

“Yes!” El raised her arms in victory, a triumphant smile lighting up her face.

Dustin surfaced, his face tight with anger.

“You cheated! You used your powers to give me a wedgie!” They couldn’t see him readjusting but the guys winced in sympathy. El’s face was passive and she shrugged, barely hiding a smile.

Her face was innocent but her eyes were laughing, and then a small trickle of blood oozed out of her nose, giving her secret away. Dustin swam over to them, Will behind him, Lucas coming from the other side, looking like hungry sharks. El giggled and Mike backed away, suddenly more scared of his vengeful friends than his telekinetic girlfriend. With a roar they pounced, pulling El off his shoulders and lifting her into the air, taking her further out before throwing her into the lake as she laughed and protested, accepting her punishment and flailing about in the water.

They made her promise not to use her powers again and went a few more rounds, switching out partners, the sun traveling high into the sky. Around noon they all crawled out, faces warm from the sun, hungry from splashing around all morning, and headed for their towels, flopping down with tired but happy grins. Dustin attacked the picnic basket first, passing out the bologna sandwiches and sodas and then ripping into a bag of potato chips. They sat around, munching happily and discussing their plans for their senior year of high school. El sat near the edge of the blanket, throwing her crusts —she hated crust— to the seagulls that had been watching hungrily.

Mike scooted himself next to her, watching the seagulls squabble. He reached over, gently setting his hand on her knee, tracing little patterns on her skin, glancing at her and admiring her silently. Her honey-brown locks had started to dry, waving and frizzing around

her face which, despite several layers of sunblock, was still turning a bit pink, matching her swimsuit.

“Are you having fun?”

She reached for his hand on her knee and laced her fingers with his, turning her head to smile softly at him. This whole trip had been for her, after all, and though she seemed to be having a good time, he wanted to make sure.

“Yes,” she nodded and looked at him, eyes wide and soft, “Thanks for bringing me, Mike.”

He leaned towards her, almost involuntarily, eyes on her lips, hand still holding hers.

*THWACK!* The soda can was mostly empty but it still hurt as it bounced off the back of his head and he whipped around, glaring back at the three boys who were trying to keep straight faces.

“What the hell, you guys?!” He rubbed the back of his head and glared at them. “That hurt.”

El glanced between the boys and Mike, unhappy that they hurt him. She hated anyone hurting Mike, friend or not. But then she smiled as an idea blossomed in her mind. Remembering what she’d seen Karen do after Holly had bonked her head on the table, she reached out, grabbing Mike’s head between her hands, and giving him a sympathetic look.

“Let me kiss it better.”

Without waiting for an answer she pulled his face towards her and kissed him full on the lips, glancing out of the side of her eyes at her friends. He startled for a second but kissed back without hesitation, one hand coming down to rest on her waist as she pulled him closer.

“Gross, guys!”

“Get a room!”

A second soda can was chucked their way, but this time it stopped

mid-air, spinning, before heading back the way it came but faster, bonking Dustin right between the eyes. He yelped and grabbed his face and El ended the kiss so she could laugh at him. Mike tried to hide his disappointment but failed and she glanced at him and pecked his cheek before standing up, heading back to the water, beckoning him with a smile.

He jumped up and followed her, almost as if he was being pulled along, but she didn't need to use her powers on him, not when she was looking at him like *that*. He ignored the whoops and hollers coming from behind him and headed towards the waves where she'd disappeared. Spotting her head and shoulders bobbing further out, he swam towards her, not really sure what to expect.

As he got closer, she turned to face him, hair slicked down to her head, a smirk twitching at her lips. She reached her arms towards him and her eyes were full of need and want and something else he couldn't quite place.

"Uh, El—"

He had reached where she was, his feet still standing on the bottom of the lake, and she captured him with her arms, pulling herself towards him. Their mouths collided and Mike suddenly realized why she had brought him out so far. Her legs wrapped around his waist, her arms around his neck, keeping him pressed close as she danced her tongue in and out of his mouth. She was virtually weightless in the water, but one of his hands snaked around her hips, the other around her upper back, holding her securely to him, kissing her back with a ferocity he didn't know he had. They were lost in the waves, the water around them growing choppy and higher, hiding them from sight, their lips entangled. Mike's thumb played with the back of her top, dipping underneath the fabric and massaging her back. She shivered and pressed herself to him harder, her skin boiling, her kisses growing sloppier as they burned together, hands scorching trails up and down each other's bodies.

They pulled back for a breath and Mike realized he couldn't feel the bottom of the lake anymore, they were floating, stuck together, somewhere further out than they'd been.

“El—”

She interrupted him with another kiss, unconcerned, wiping at her nose quickly, not wanting to let him ruin anything with logic.

“Don’t worry,” she whispered the words against his lips between kisses. He obliged and focused back on her, his hand dropping lower on her hip, gently squeezing and breathing through his nose as he trailed kisses along her jawline to her neck, barely believing that this was happening, that his girlfriend was making out with him in the middle of a lake and keeping them from drowning with her mind.

This was newer territory, not just the being in the lake thing, but the making out. They’d only really done it once before, while watching *The Breakfast Club* in the living room under a fort made of blankets and tablecloths one Saturday night a few weeks ago. It was more of a beginning of a makeout, they’d been rudely interrupted by Holly who had snuck out of bed for a glass of water and had immediately squealed when she saw the fort.

No, this was definitely something they hadn’t really had the chance to figure out, but El was charging ahead anyways, clinging tightly to Mike, who was still thanking God for being so good to him, and giving back what she gave. More than anything he didn’t want to make her uncomfortable or push too far, but as his thumb brushed back and forth on her bare skin, he caught the fabric on the back of her top with his finger. It pulled and then unsnapped. He jerked his head back, horrified.

“Oh, shit, sorry, I...” he gulped, eyes apologetic, “I didn’t mean to do that.”

He reached back around her to try and find the snap and fix it but she grabbed his arms, looking down shyly, and stopped him. The fabric was floating up away from her body, still hanging around her neck but no longer anchored to her chest. His mouth grew dry and his heart started thumping as it dawned on him that she wasn’t afraid of him seeing, that she wanted him to. She adjusted her legs, loosening her grip so they weren’t pressed so tightly together, slowly reaching up, nervous but resolute, and pushed the fabric over her shoulder, exposing her bare chest to him.

Mike stared down at her, taking her in with hungry eyes, his jaw slack. El bit her lip and looked up at him and he stopped staring so he could meet her gaze, his inky-brown eyes unreadable. She asked the question, voice almost shaking.

“Pretty?”

He kept himself from laughing at the question, glancing back down at her exposed chest, eyes honest and wide when they came back up and met hers.

“You’re fucking *gorgeous* , El.”

His voice was almost a growl, and she felt herself warming, then burning, her insecurity melting. She pulled him back to her, pressing their bare chests together, placing kisses along his temple, her breath hot and heavy in his ear. Mike shuddered at the contact, feeling like he was going to lose his mind. His body had decided to let him know that it was very much liking what it saw, and his head felt light, the blood rushing to lower areas. He felt his hands sliding up her waist towards her chest, wanting to explore, but he paused and clenched his them into fists, suddenly extremely uneasy. She felt him tense and pulled back again, keeping her arms around his neck, looking into his eyes.

“Mike?”

He was breathing heavily, barely able to control himself but not wanting to scare her.

“El, I...” he was embarrassed but also hesitant, “We... we gotta stop. I can’t...”

She looked almost hurt, the insecurity coming back and visibly worrying her. He shook his head, berating himself for not being more sensitive.

“Not because— I mean, you’re great, you’re fucking incredible, but I, um,” He gestured downward with his head, “If we keep going I’m not going to want to stop.” She looked confused for a second but as the Sex Ed talk they’d been given during sophomore year came rushing

back she visibly reddened.

“Oh, um. I’m sorry.” Her voice was a squeak.

“No, don’t... don’t be sorry. It’s, um, It’s fine. But, uh,” He looked right into her eyes, his own filled with concern, the fiery emotions buried beneath his need to make her feel safe, “I don’t want to, um, do anything you’re not comfortable with.”

They hadn’t let go of each other, her legs still around his waist, and there was a moment of silence as she contemplated what she wanted, eyes blinking and bright. The fiery feeling in her core had faded a bit as she realized the situation she was in, and it became clear that she may have started something she wasn’t ready to finish. She glanced down, mouth open, choosing her words carefully.

“We should head back...” Her voice was quiet, but sure, and she darted her eyes up to look at him, afraid he’d be angry. His eyes were gentle and understanding and full of affection and she relaxed, wondering why she even thought he’d be upset. He was *Mike*. He was kind and gentle and understanding and *good*.

“Okay.”

He nodded and his hands reached up with amazing self-control, grabbing her top and bringing it back around to her front, then reaching behind to refasten it. *I’m so lucky*, she thought, and pushed herself up to press a soft kiss on his cheek, eyes blinking gratitude. They untangled themselves and then looked around for the shore, finding it in the distance, the people walking along the waterfront just specks of color. Mike suddenly looked worried.

“Shit. We’re really far out.”

Before he’d even finished his sentence the waves began to undulate, gently pushing them towards the shore, more quickly than they could have swam. He glanced over at her as she wiped her nose, amazed, as usual, at how powerful she was. Within a few minutes they were touching the bottom, emerging from the dark water holding hands and walking back towards the blanket where Lucas, Will, and Dustin were sitting, playing a card game. Dustin spotted them first, his face



going from determined to laughing in a split second.

“Boner alert!”

The other two boys whipped their heads around and Lucas straight up barked, the laughter almost choking him. Will turned a strange color, his eyes bouncing back and forth between El and Mike. Mike had turned red, not from the sun this time, and snatched his towel off the ground, wrapping it around his hips and glaring at Dustin. If looks could kill.

“Jesus, were you guys screwing out there?” He wasn’t done yet. “That’s gotta be unsanitary.”

El frowned at him and shook her head.

“No. Just kissing.” Will relaxed visibly but still refused to make eye contact with anybody, staring down at his hand of cards intensely. Lucas snickered.

“Yeah, okay.” He made air quotes. “‘Just kissing’.”

Mike made a noise of protest, not appreciating the joke, but Will piped up, his voice surprisingly hard.

“Leave them alone, guys,” he glanced at the couple again and shuddered, “I seriously do not want to know.”

Dustin and Lucas exchanged glances, clearly not wanting to let their friends get away with it that easily, but Will was serious and stared them down until Lucas shrugged and Dustin sighed.

“Yeah, okay.” He couldn’t resist last one quip. “Remember to wrap it before you tap it!”

They, Mike and Will, groaned, for completely different reasons. El just shrugged, remembering the banana example they’d been so explicitly shown, and then nodded.

“Yes,” she was very matter-of-fact, not really embarrassed by their taunts, “No babies.”

That made them lose it, Will even cracking a smile at her bluntness. When they'd finished laughing and they'd dealt the couple into their game, they spent a good part of the afternoon teaching El to play poker. She turned to be really good at it, her passive face completely unreadable, and as the sun sunk lower in the sky she managed to bleed Dustin dry of all of the comics he was dumb enough to keep betting. There was a cool breeze coming over the lake, and even though it wasn't really cold, Mike noticed her shivering. They were still in their swimsuits but as the darkness slowly filled the sky and the warm sun deserted them, he definitely could understand why she felt cold. He reached over and rubbed his hand across her upper back, trying to warm her a bit.

"Did you want to change?" She nodded, shivering again, but looked around at the almost deserted beach in confusion.

"Where?"

Oh, right. Privacy. He looked back towards the parking lot, lit up by headlights of cars that were pulling out and leaving.

"Um, maybe the car? I could..." He tugged at the blanket they were sitting on. "I could hold up the blanket so no one can see." She shrugged and nodded, not able to think of a better solution.

"Okay."

They stood, pulling the blanket out from under Lucas who was still sitting halfway on it, and he turned and glared as he was almost knocked over.

"What are you doing?"

"El wants to change." He nodded towards the car. "I'm going to use this to give her some privacy."

Lucas's signature cynical snort followed them as they walked away and he called out, "Privacy my ass!"

Mike rolled his eyes and unlocked the car so El could get her clothes out of the back. They kept the trunk popped and he hefted up the blanket, his height and long arms easily making a cozy pod of

privacy. He kept his back turned, the blanket in front of him, and she quickly grabbed her clean clothes from the bag and began to change, shuffling around a bit and humming non-committedly. It was suddenly quiet and Mike turned his head a bit, about to ask if she was done.

Before he could get the words out he felt a whisper-soft touch on his exposed back, ticklish, and then another, and he realized they were kisses, slowly being trailed down his shoulder blade. Her arms came up and wrapped around his rib cage, and she hugged him from behind, pressing herself against his back. He suddenly realized she was definitely, totally, completely naked.

He almost dropped the blanket.

She stopped kissing him and instead nestled her head against his back, her hair kitten-soft, her breath warm. He was tense, unsure of what she was doing, and as badly as he wanted to turn around and pull her into his arms, he wasn't about to let go of the blanket and let the rest of the world see too.

"Mike," her voice was a hushed breeze, "Thank you."

"For what?" He croaked, looking down at the arms around him. If he'd thought about it, it would have seemed obvious, but his mind was racing with other ideas that weren't particularly wholesome. He felt her draw in a breath, warm on his back.

"For being you." She exhaled. "For being good."

He was puzzled, not that she could tell, but he calmed himself down and remembered the afternoon. It dawned on him.

"Oh, you mean because of earlier? In the lake?" His arms were shaking a bit from holding up the blanket but he ignored it. "El, you know, I... I would *never* —"

"I know."

She interrupted him before he could trip over his words and pressed another kiss to his spine.

“That’s why I love you.”

She let him go and turned around to actually put on some clothes and he let out a shaky breath, heart dancing, grinning like an idiot. It didn’t matter how many times she said it, those words always got his pulse racing and face burning. Maybe it was the way she said it, her voice so honest and sure, like she knew that even if she wasn’t sure of anything, she was positive she loved him. He felt like he could never compete with that and usually chose to show her his love instead of tell her. Words were easy for him, they spilled from his lips in messy sentences and conversations that he didn’t remember or care for, facts and lies and ideas all mushed together. But with her it was different. Her words were precious, soft-spoken, and he treasured each one, especially the ones that were about him or for him, or when she said his name. To him there wasn’t a sweeter sound or better melody than her voice saying his name.

A gentle hand touched his arm.

“I’m done.”

He dropped the blanket with a groan, shaking his arms in an attempt to get blood flow back into his hands. Turning around with a grimace, he looked at El, who was sitting in the trunk, casually chewing on a Mars bar. She had ravenous sweet tooth and a tendency to hide candy in her bags and pockets. She held it out to Mike and he nibbled it, not particularly caring for chocolate but not wanting to refuse her. Then he squinted at her, an eyebrow raised.

“Woah, hey, is that my shirt?”

It was a grey, navy, white, and yellow striped, long-sleeve polo, the collar once white but now a worn out beige. The shirt was definitely small on her, the hem barely covering her belly button, the sleeves only reaching three-quarters of the way down her arm. She had it unbuttoned down to the last button, the only way to make it fit over her ample chest. He was pretty sure he was twelve when he’d last worn it, and considering how it fit on *her* there was no way it would fit his broad shoulders now.

She looked up him, eyes guilty, the candy bar sticking out of her

mouth.

“...Yesth?” She managed to say through a mouth full of chocolate.

Her deer-in-the-headlights face was adorable and he couldn't help but laugh, a stray butterfly tickling his stomach as he realized that she had stolen his shirt and kept it for years. In fact, considering how good she looked in it, he wouldn't have minded if she had several. He smirked at her.

“It looks... way better on you.”

She relaxed and then giggled, reaching out with sticky fingers to pull him down next to her in the trunk, the car sagging under their combined weight. She leaned over and pressed a quick kiss on his lips before returning to her Mars bar. He licked the chocolate off his lips, grinning, and reached into his own bag to pull out a clean shirt, striped of course, and wiggled into it, not feeling the need to change out of his now-dry swim shorts. She'd finished her candy bar and sat up, looking down the beach towards their friends who were walking towards them, towels and clothing in their arms, feet sluggish. The setting sun was casting its last rays, giving the world a pink-orange glow. The boys got closer, and Mike hopped up out of the trunk so they could throw their things in.

“Are we heading back?” Dustin yawned the question. “I'm super tired.”

Mike shrugged and glanced at his watch.

“We don't have to be back until midnight and it's just past seven thirty,” he glanced at El, who had started yawning too, “But if you guys are tired, we can head out.”

There was a murmur of agreement, everyone had tired themselves out, and they were kind of hungry. It was still an hour and a half drive and as they piled in, Mike fiddled with the radio, hoping to find a station to keep him awake. They weren't on the road for more than fifteen minutes before a chorus of snores was sawing wood from the back of the car. El had curled up in the passenger seat, her legs underneath her, her shoulder resting on the window, head drooping

as she tried to keep herself awake, softly humming along with the radio.

Keeping one hand on the wheel, he reached his other over and grasped hers, affectionately rubbing small circles on the back. She let out a contented sigh and her head dropped down a bit, resting on the car door. Her breathing became more even as she slowly dozed off. She was still clutching his hand, though, and he smiled.

It had been a good day.

### **Author's Note:**

there it is. i love making el wear mike's clothes a lot.

so like i said before, i wasn't just trying to write a makeout for the sake of writing a makeout, but i wanted to really show how amazing mike is and how safe he makes her feel even when they're going into completely new territory.

mike wheeler is just a fucking saint oh my god.

also if anyone who reads this likes the stranger teens series idea, please let me know. throw me some prompts. so far the only idea i have is a date night but i'm grossly uninspired. help meeee.